

# ***Iowa Outdoors***

**Iowa Department of Natural Resources**  
**[www.iowadnr.gov](http://www.iowadnr.gov)**

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## **FOUR BWI ARRESTS DURING BOATING ENFORCEMENT PROJECT ON MISSOURI RIVER**

SIOUX CITY - The Iowa Department of Natural Resources conducted a boating safety project on the Missouri River at Sioux City on July 26 that resulted in four arrests of boating while intoxicated and 14 other citations or written warnings. Two additional boat operators were found to be just under Iowa's .10 blood alcohol concentration limit. The safety project was conducted from 5 p.m. to 9 p.m. on the river.

Conservation Officer Steve Griebel said officers made contact with between 40 and 45 vessels and by far the biggest issue was operators violating the speed and distance rules. "The river downstream from Sioux City is fairly narrow and boats and personal watercraft are often going too fast for the number on the water," he said.

"One positive we found was that in all the boats we checked that had kids, all of the kids were wearing life jackets. That was nice to see," Griebel said.

He said they will be doing these safety projects on the river in the future. "The project went well and we would like to expand it in the future in an effort to keep the river safe," he said.

Six officers with Department of Natural Resources were assisted by a deputy with the Woodbury County Sheriff's Department to conduct the project from three boats.

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## **LOTS OF CATCHING UP TO DO**

By Joe Wilkinson

Iowa Department of Natural Resources

How many crappies? Why bother reporting that deer? Get the answers in the weeks ahead because they will affect how you fish and hunt.

**HEAR ABOUT IT...**Expect the conversation to pick up in the coming days, as anglers learn more about a pitch to establish possession limits for crappie, bluegill and yellow perch on inland waters. At its July meeting, Iowa's Natural Resource Commission was given information about limits in surrounding states and on the Mississippi River in Iowa.

Bluegills and crappies are two of the most popular fish species pursued in Iowa. Currently there are no inland limits, though the Mississippi River has daily limits of 25 (each) for bluegills, crappies and yellow perch. That went into effect a couple years ago.

"I haven't heard a single thing over here; good or bad," relays Department of Natural Resources fisheries technician Chris Mack, who works the heavily fished Coralville Reservoir, Lake Macbride and other eastern Iowa lakes and streams. A couple anglers I queried hadn't heard anything until now, either.

The push for limits is anchored in northwest Iowa, where some anglers have witnessed others taking home buckets of panfish. They cite social and ethical reasons for restricting possession. On the other side, the 'no limit' camp points out that no biological reason has been shown to reduce the panfish harvest. They argue the species reproduce in large numbers and quickly replace or grow to the sizes of fish removed. There *are* closely managed limits for 'predator' fish; such as black bass, walleyes, catfish and northern pike in Iowa.

At its August 14 meeting, the Commission may hear a notice of intended action, which spells out the proposed limit, the reasons for it, and a timeline for public comment and a decision.

**CALL IT IN...**There are few changes in the just-published 2008-09 Iowa hunting and trapping regulations. This year's booklet, though, highlights hunter responsibilities to correctly tag and report deer and turkeys harvested. It also looks ahead to a new electronic licensing system and the controversy over hunting deer with lead slugs.

An entire page is devoted to correctly tagging those 'big game' animals. Another half-page is devoted to Iowa's mandatory deer and turkey harvest reporting system. Through the first two seasons, there generally has been no enforcement as kinks were worked out of the system and as hunters got used to entering information about their harvest over the telephone or online.

Come this fall and winter, though, and that learning curve may be reached.

"Expectations will be that the softer enforcement is going to give way to stronger enforcement," forecasts DNR Law Enforcement Bureau Chief Lowell Joslin. "It's been around for two, three seasons. We *do require* hunters to register their harvest. We will encourage them to do just that."

Since the mandatory requirement went into effect, DNR officials say field and meat locker checks showed residents are reporting only 91 percent of the deer killed. That makes it difficult for biologists to get an accurate harvest, in order to set future seasons and limits.

"Hunters need to work with us to properly manage our deer herd and part of that cooperation is for hunters to report their harvest," urges DNR Wildlife Bureau Chief Dale Garner. He calls the hunter reported harvest an important part of Iowa's herd management.

The booklet previews a new electronic licensing system which could debut early in 2009 and offers suggestions to minimize exposure to lead fragments in venison. That caution, though, emphasizes that 500,000 Iowans tested for lead poisoning since 1992 and that none have shown elevated levels attributed to venison of other wild game.

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## **YOUNG OSPREYS TAKING FLIGHT ACROSS IOWA**

The Iowa Department of Natural Resources received 19 ospreys from Minnesota and Wisconsin on July 14 – 17 and will be releasing them this week at hack sites around the state. The young fliers are released in a passive manner to ensure they do not imprint on people or bolt from the site.

Where ospreys learn to fly and catch fish on their own when fledging is where surviving adults return to nest at four to five years of age. Volunteers are driving energy in this exciting project by fundraising for the birds, providing fish for ospreys to eat, and monitoring their health while in hack boxes and upon release. The birds will be self-sufficient and catching fish on their own in a few weeks.

Volunteers and conservation staff have released four birds from their hack site in Clear Lake. Clear Lake mayor and osprey steward, Nelson Crabb, said their four birds

can be seen flying around the lake and returning to hack site for supplemental feeding at Iowa Regular Baptist Camp. Contact Nelson at (641)-357-3839 for further information or to contribute to their osprey project.

Four ospreys will be released by osprey volunteers at Elk Rock State Park, near Knoxville, in the next few days. Marla Mertz with Marion County Conservation Board oversees this site with the aid of many volunteers. Stewards at this site also includes Chad Rowson with DNR State Parks Bureau and John Mertz with DNR Law Enforcement Bureau. Marla Mertz can be reached at 641-891-8226 for further information or contributions to their site. An osprey webcam has been established at [http://www.iowadnr.com/parks/special\\_projects/webcam.html](http://www.iowadnr.com/parks/special_projects/webcam.html)

Four birds will be released at Spirit Lake by volunteers and staff with Dickinson County Conservation Board. Barb Tagami, county naturalist, and Tim Waltz, DNR wildlife technician, reported the four ospreys from Minnesota are progressing well for release later this week. Contact Tagami at 712-338-4238 for further information or contribution opportunities.

A new site has been established this year at Mud Lake in Dubuque. Dubuque County Conservation staff have partnered with University of Dubuque students to release four Wisconsin ospreys this week. Contact Chris Clingan with Dubuque CCB at 563-451-9361 to volunteer or contribute to their project.

Kay Neumann with Saving Our Avian Resources (SOAR) will be releasing six ospreys this week at the White Rock Conservancy site, near Coon Rapids. Three of these ospreys were rescued at Saylorville Reservoir by Polk County Conservation Board naturalist Joe Boyles. Flood waters in June were about to consume the nest tree, when Boyles coordinated their rescue. Neumann can be reached for information or to offer contributions at 712-830-6116.

“All osprey sites have benefitted from osprey rehabilitation at some point, and it is good to commend all Neumann’s work with S.O.A.R., Jodeane Cancilla and staff with Macbride Raptor Project, Dr. Mary Ann Nieves and students at ISU Wildlife Care Clinic, Beth Brown, Osceola, Marla Mertz, from Knoxville, and Linda Hinshaw, from Spirit Lake,” said Pat Schlarbaum, with the Iowa DNR’s wildlife diversity program. “A big thank you goes to these facilities and wildlife rehabbers for all they do for wildlife and environmental education. Central Iowa Paddlers group contributed \$1,280 to assist with osprey reintroduction around the state and deserve a big thank you as well.”

Iowans are encouraged to look for purple bands on the ospreys right leg which are unique to Iowa and indicate surviving birds that have returned to Iowa to nest. Wild produced birds in Iowa have a green USFWS band on their left leg.

This year there are 11 reported nesting osprey pairs. Don Williams Lake in Boone County joined Saylorville with having nesting ospreys. Two nests in Linn County

and a nesting pair at Rathbun were unsuccessful. Unfortunately, severe weather negatively impacted each site.

At the Lake Macbride area of Coralville Reservoir, Jodeane Cancilla, director of Macbride Raptor Project, reported three nesting pairs. A nesting pair was successful at Cedar Falls, and a new nesting pair at Sioux City was a bonus to an otherwise down year for successful nesting ospreys in Iowa.

Three young fledged from Sioux City pair. Also a new nest has been discovered near Maffit Lake in Madison County.

Since 1997, 209 ospreys have been released at 10 sites, of which 37 wild produced ospreys from Iowa nests have been produced at 18 nests, since 2003.

**For further information contact [Pat.Schlarbaum@DNR.Iowa.gov](mailto:Pat.Schlarbaum@DNR.Iowa.gov) or 712-330-0526**

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[Electronic photo available upon request]

## **IOWA OSPREY RECOVERY REACHES NEW MILESTONE**

By Lowell Washburn

Iowa Department of Natural Resources

**CLEAR LAKE----**A group of four translocated, immature ospreys have been liberated and are on the wing at Clear Lake.

According to DNR Osprey Recovery Coordinator, Pat Schlarbaum, the birds mark the fourth and final year of osprey transplants at Clear Lake. From here on out, it will be up to the birds, he said. Wildlife enthusiasts are hoping that adult ospreys will one day return to northern Iowa, establish nesting territories, and successfully rear young.

“So far, it’s been a tremendous year for the Iowa osprey recovery program,” says Schlarbaum. “This summer, we were able to obtain a total of 19 young ospreys from nests in Minnesota and Wisconsin where populations are thriving. Those birds are currently being released at five separate sites that cover an area from Spirit Lake in the northwest to Dubuque on the Mississippi River.”

“The osprey recovery is also showing significant gains as survivors from previous releases return to Iowa and claim new breeding territories,” said Schlarbaum. “At this point, we’ve been able to document a total of 11 wild nests in Iowa this summer which is a definite milestone for the recovery.”

Since beginning the osprey relocation program in 1997, the DNR's recovery effort has relied heavily on public support and participation. At Clear Lake, that hands-on involvement goes all the way to the top.

Rain or shine, and regardless of heat, humidity, or swarms of mid-summer mosquitoes, Mayor Nelson Crabb rarely fails to make an early morning visit to Clear Lake's osprey release tower. During the past four summers, the mayor has served as the lake's volunteer Osprey Caretaker. Until the newly fledged birds fully develop critical angling skills and are able to fend for themselves, Crabb supplies daily nutritional needs in the form of freshly thawed bullheads. It's a smelly job to be sure, but then someone has to do it.

But Crabb views the effort as anything but work. For him, it is simply a necessary labor of love. Strike up an osprey conversation, and it doesn't take long to discover the mayor has become a hardcore advocate for this magnificent and intriguing bird species.

"To me, these birds are just fascinating," says Crabb. "Their first flights are simply incredible. They know exactly when they can go, and there's no hesitation --- they just take to the sky. The older, more developed birds go first. The younger ones just wait and watch. Then, at the exact right moment, they go. There's a lot more to it than just flapping your wings. Those initial flights take total coordination and the birds never falter. Watching the ospreys develop is nearly indefinable. It almost seems miraculous."

"We released our [Clear Lake] birds last Thursday, and so right now they're still just sort of hanging out near the hack tower located at the Baptist Camp," said Crabb. "Mostly, they're testing their wings, doing a lot of preening, and making short flights to and from the release tower for food. If things go as they have in the past, these birds will begin making serious attempts at catching their own fish within the next two weeks or so."

"Ospreys are very social and very vocal. Their calls are almost musical," notes Crabb. "When I arrive with fish each morning, the birds recognize my Jeep. Sometimes they're perched in trees where I can't see them. But as soon as I pull up, they start chattering. It's like a greeting and, to me, it is just amazing that a wild bird will do that. I think, 'What a way to start the morning.' That's when I realize how fortunate I am to be involved in something like this."

"I think the osprey project has been good for Clear Lake and there's been a huge community interest in this project," says Crabb. "I've received a lot of very, very positive comments. A lot of people, including myself, have become totally fascinated by these incredible birds."

Community interest is exactly what Schlarbaum was hoping for.

“I don’t think there’s any question that osprey releases have brought Iowans into closer contact with our natural resources,” notes Schlarbaum. “At the Spirit Lake site, we actually have kids out fishing for ospreys. They bring in part of their catch to share with the birds. In some cases those same kids are literally educating their parents on the osprey recovery and the importance of maintaining clean water. That’s priceless.”

“I think more and more Iowans are beginning to place an increased priority on our natural resources,” notes Schlarbaum. “What’s happening at Clear Lake is a great example. To have the mayor of a major resort community engage in this level of support really puts things into perspective. Ospreys carry a powerful environmental message, and that message is getting through. People are connecting.”

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## **NEW MAPS OF STATE WILDLIFE AREAS NOW ON-LINE**

DES MOINES - New maps for Iowa wildlife management areas that allow public hunting are now available on the Iowa Department of Natural Resources website. Creating the new maps was a three year process and replaced those created in 2000-01.

The new maps use 2006 aerial photography as a base layer, show the infrastructure on the area including boat ramps, parking lots, foot trails, access roads, dog trial areas, scenic overlooks and shooting ranges. The maps include acres, common species, habitat and directions and show refuge boundaries and any special restrictions on the area.

County maps can be selected either by using a drop down menu or by clicking on the county on an interactive map. Maps cover 340,000 acres and will be updated on an annual basis.

The maps can be found at <http://www.iowadnr.gov/wildlife/wmamaps/index.html>

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[Electronic photos available upon request]

## ***FISH IOWA! GAMES FINALS***

Individual medalists from the *Fish Iowa! Games* casting competitions held this spring competed in a finals competition during the Iowa Games on July 18. Medals were awarded in two age groups. The top two winners in each group received a rod and reel.

### **Age 6-10**

1<sup>st</sup> – Derek Simmons, Avoca

2<sup>nd</sup> – Jaykob Wallace, Clarence  
3<sup>rd</sup> – Kyle Branan, Avoca  
Participant – Caden Larson, Avoca  
Participant – AJ Sieh, Avoca

**Age 11-16**

1<sup>st</sup> – Warren Jennings, Williamsburg  
2<sup>nd</sup> – Morgan Weeks, Milo  
3<sup>rd</sup> – Abbie Wanders, Pella  
Participant – Anna Schulte, Williamsburg  
Participant – Dylan Bowling, Andrew

Sponsors of the competition include the Mid Iowa Bassmasters, Iowa Sports Foundation (Iowa Games), and the Iowa Department of Natural Resources.

*Fish Iowa! Games* is a casting competition developed by the Iowa Sports Foundation (Iowa Games) in conjunction with the Iowa Department of Natural Resources. The program is a fun competition where students learn to cast from three distances using the flipping, pitching and casting techniques. During the competition participants received points based on the accuracy of each casting technique.

*Fish Iowa! Games* is a great introduction to fishing for the kids of Iowa. Often this is the first time kids have held a rod and reel. More than 8,200 students from across the state participated in the Fish Iowa Games program.

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